

SIR JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, YORKSHIREMAN and DERMATOLOGIST *

JOHN T. INGRAM

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I AM very conscious of the honour done me in being elected to the presidency of this happy and distinguished society and I am hardly worthy, I feel, to hold a position which has been occupied by so many distinguished men in the past.

I must confess to a little deception in the matter of the title of my address for it should have been "Dermatology, the Salvation of Mankind," and I can only hope, as I believe, that Sir Jonathan Hutchinson would not have reproved me for substituting his name and for preaching from his notes. Many of you know that I do not often miss an opportunity to preach the gospel that dermatology is the quintessence of medicine and I do it, not I hope, from any selfish or ulterior motive, but because it is a creed to which I subscribe with my whole mind and soul and with no shadow of reservation.

You may think that

"I'm the prophet of the utterly absurd
Of the patently impossible and vain"

but it makes no matter for if I had no other witness it would be difficult to refute the great Jonathan Hutchinson. Hear what comfortable words he spoke at Birmingham in the summer of 1890 to the whole profession gathered for the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association:—

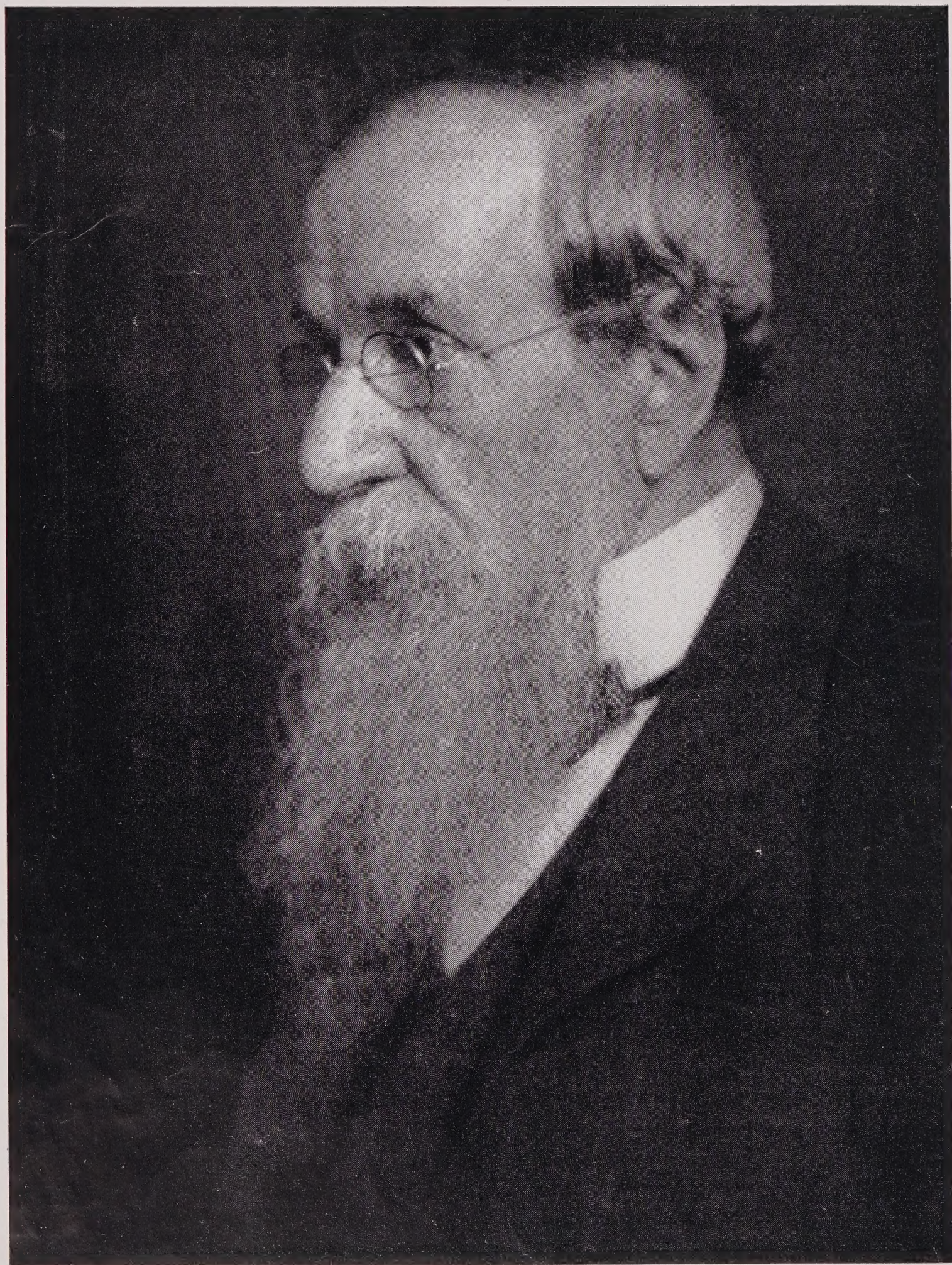
"Dermatology should take a foremost place in the education of our students. What is learned here is of the utmost use in application to the diseases of other parts. There is nothing restrictedly special in our speciality—it comprises the whole domain of pathology. It provides unequalled opportunities to investigate the laws which regulate disease action—and to add to general knowledge."

I would ask what you as a profession have done about this serious injunction? What heed have our University Medical Schools, our Royal Colleges and Medical Councils, paid to the serious words of this wise man? Let me remind you of the words of Hutchinson's great teacher, Sir James Paget, spoken of Hutchinson himself in another connexion. "If any of us think," said Sir James, "that Mr. Hutchinson is looking into outer darkness we shall be very unwise if we neglect his signals when he says that light is come." But you have been unwise throughout these fifty and more years, and still neglect his signals.

The ethics of the conception that dermatology might even at this late hour save the world, I will not elaborate here, except to indicate that with the passing of the ministries of religion from their pride of place and the disintegration of the teaching profession under the stress of politics, there rests with the doctor and physician—which being interpreted is the teacher and healer or student of nature—there rests with him a unique opportunity to bring the

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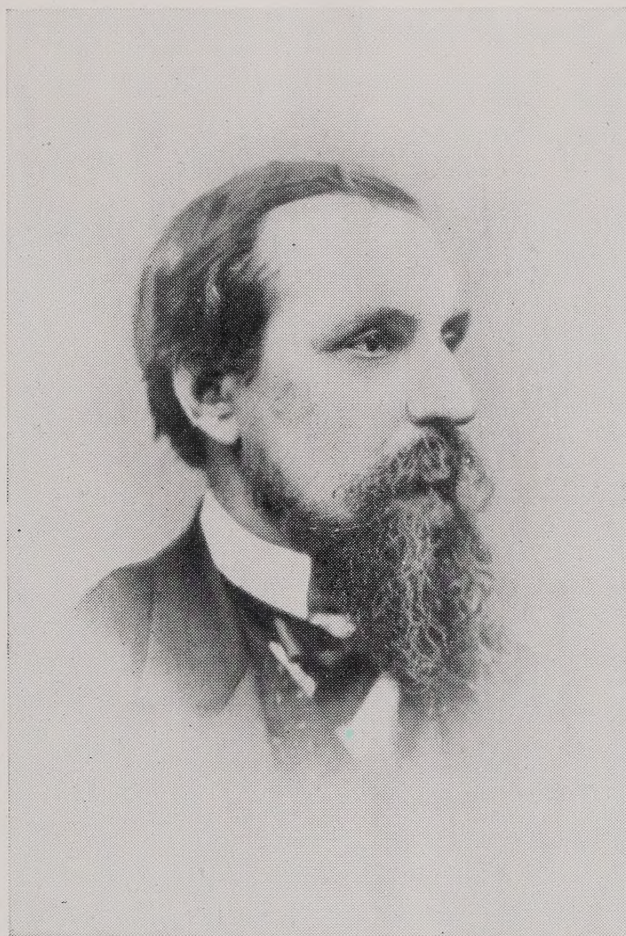




SIR JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.R.S., D.C.L.(Oxon.), LL.D.(Camb. and Edin.), (1828-1913.

good life to men and women. Our humane profession ever casts a strange spell over men, rich and poor, wise and foolish and the influence of the profession is enormous.

The true physician is of necessity a dermatologist for whoever deceives himself into believing that he is wise in regard to the medicine of parts removed from the eye and the hand and who cannot recognize that medicine displayed upon the surface is neither true to himself nor to his calling.



JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, 1880, aged 52.

When approaching seventy years of age, in his presidential address to the 3rd International Congress of Dermatology held in London in 1896, Hutchinson dwelt upon the lessons to be learnt from dermatology, his remarks ranging over tuberculosis and the nature of cancer, the functions of nomenclature and the social importance of disease. Here are a few of his *obiter dicta*, any one of which might form the subject of a lecture :—

“We are too eager,” he said, “to discriminate, and too slow to combine and to trace relationships.”

“Skin cancer points to an alliance with inherited or acquired, general or local disturbances of nutrition—to a reduction of that wonderful controlling force under which individual parts and structures are restrained in their growth within the limits of what is necessary for the good of the whole,” with which, I think, our experts in tissue culture would agree.

“Clinicist and histologist must work together and accept help from one another—but conclusions must still be subject to the control of clinical observation.”

“It is not without significance that the final trial to which the patience of Job was subjected was a loathsome disease of the skin.”

He observes that “names are good servants but bad masters.”

And finally, on the ethical side I emphasize his concluding words which in brief proclaim the man. He stresses his desire to conduct the affairs of the Congress “repressing selfish motives and with a single and devout aim at the discovery of truth, for the advancement of science and the increase of the happiness of mankind.”

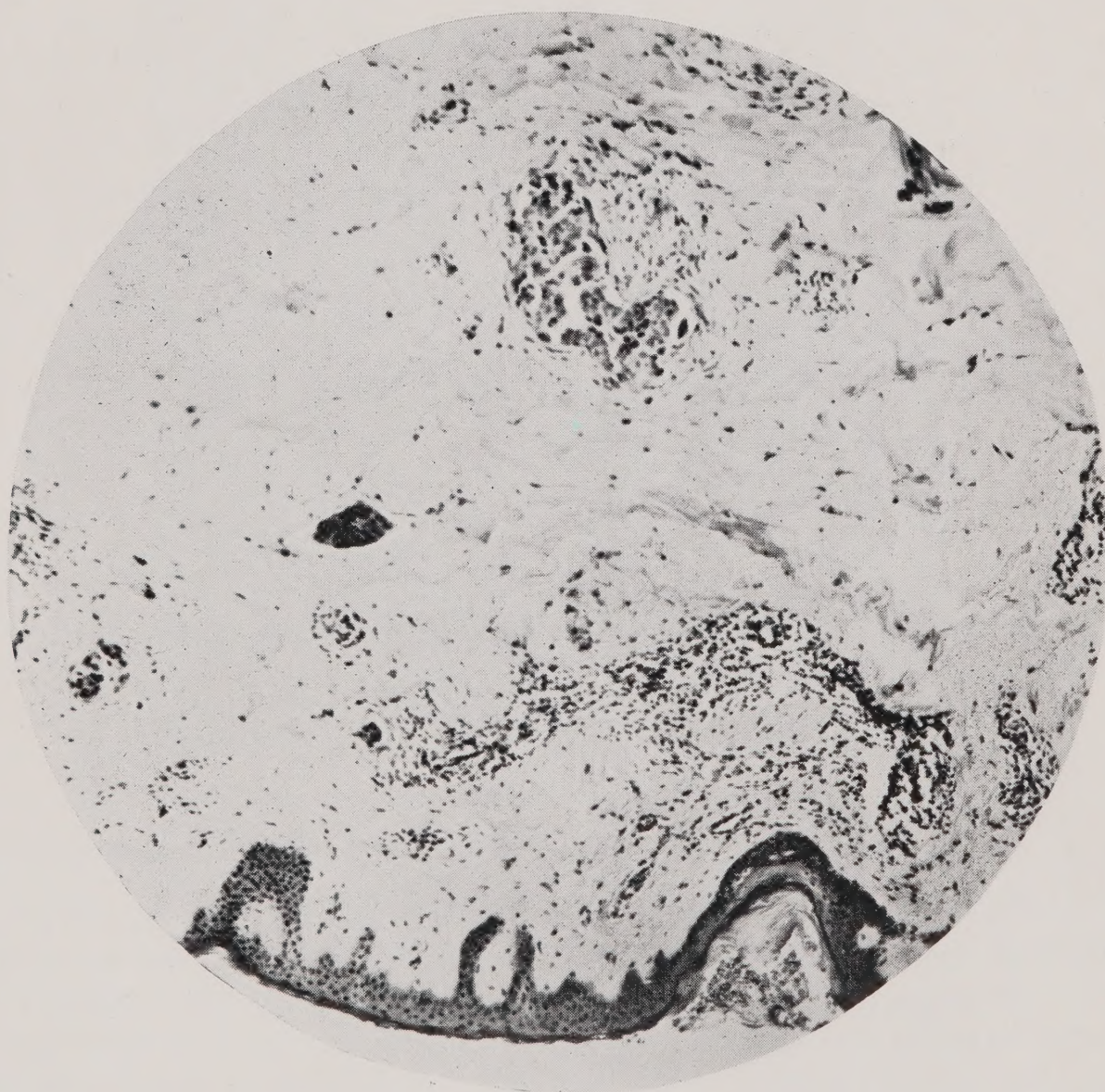


Carcinoma erysipelatodes about scar of radical mastectomy.

I must preface my remarks upon Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, dermatologist, with a brief review of the man himself and of his place in the community of his day ; his interest to me and to you and his connexions with Yorkshire. For me Hutchinson was a great dermatologist, perhaps one of the greatest if we view his work from the point of view of the patient, the general practitioner and the student, and it was dermatology that seemed to inspire his whole medical career. He was a surgeon on the staff of my old hospital, the London Hospital, and the inspiring teacher of my own master, Sequeira. I myself remember hearing Hutchinson's son, young John, lecture at the London Hospital.

Yorkshire has taken a proud place in dermatology for Robert Willan, the acknowledged father of modern dermatology, was born at Sedbergh, and his disciple and successor William Bateman, was born at Whitby. Hutchinson was born in Selby in 1828 and was educated by governesses and at Mr. Belby's school in Selby. At sixteen years of age he was apprenticed to the physician Caleb Williams in York and received his medical education at the York Medical School. He was the only pupil at some of the classes and this individual attention must have been valuable. One of his teachers, Dr. Laycock, later Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh, probably inspired Hutchinson's interest in the importance of heredity in disease.

Jonathan Hutchinson married Jane, daughter of William West, a chemist, founder of the firm of Reynolds and Branson, Lecturer in chemistry at the Yorkshire College and a Fellow of the Royal Society.



Section of carcinoma crysipelatodes.

Finally I may remind you that after the Leeds Medical School was incorporated with the Yorkshire College in 1884, Hutchinson gave the address at the Sessional opening of the Medical Department in Park Street, in October 1885, on "The Use of Knowledge." I can only draw

your attention to one or two matters in this fascinating address. "One of the most valuable faculties of the teacher," he says, "is the power of bold determination as to what may safely be left unlearned." He stresses the dignity of life in the light of knowledge, the noble character of our vocation, the desirability of being well-informed and for this he favours a broad general knowledge of many things rather than detailed instruction in the few. He is against the teaching of Greek and Latin and is only thankful that the greatest book in Hebrew is read in translation. The humanities figure largely in his picture but knowledge is the seed from which wisdom and love spring. Sir Adolphe Abrahams says "there was a distinct north-country intonation in his voice that seemed somehow to make what he said more trustworthy."



Acute epithelioma.

I have dwelt upon these Leeds and Yorkshire associations for we may well be proud of them, but I must pass swiftly to a glimpse into his life and career.

A Quaker of firm Quaker stock and conviction, he showed the independence and individuality, the singleness of purpose and the worship of truth which are to be expected. He married an equally fine character in Jane West, an intelligent, artistic and most able woman and they both participated in the ministry of their faith, for there is equality of sexes in this sphere.

It is interesting to note, later, Jonathan's doubt of the aptitude of women for medicine. In 1875 he writes his wife, "The Medical Council has decided that women are to be considered eligible for the medical profession although there are great inconveniences in detail. I am very sorry for the decision. It is too absurd. I hear that Mrs. Anderson (Elizabeth Garrett)

was engaged to attend a lady and they finally ran so close a race that it seemed not improbable that they might both be confined on the same day."

Jonathan had thought to devote his life to the poor in a missionary spirit. His religious upbringing was most strict; for long he subscribed to the forms and ceremony of his kind, but increasing knowledge while it increased his religious sense, turned him from material symbols. There was an interesting phase when, in spite of his father's distress, he abandoned the Quaker hat. Later he was given the opportunity for research and to give medical help to the forces engaged in the Crimean war and wished to accept, but submitted to the protests and the veto of his father on this occasion, to his own unhappiness.

From middle life he did not enter a place of worship—the vague conception of Celestial Immortality had been replaced by a sense of the continuity and immortality of life itself. From his knowledge of science, of evolution and heredity, he saw himself and his generation possessed of virtue and power which had come down through the generations, to which power he would add and in which he would still live through his offspring and by his influence on those with whom he made contact. This Terrestrial Immortality was immensely satisfying, gave new dignity to life and was real and tangible. In his seventy-third year he wrote out this creed, to which he subscribed to the end.

Hutchinson was a great naturalist and a student of all the sciences; he established in Selby and in Haslemere, museums depicting and relating the scientific facts of the different ages of the universe and on Sundays he lectured the populace at these centres, taking three or four subjects of different sciences and of the arts and weaving them into a whole. Rabbits and pigs, untamed Exmoor ponies and foxes formed part of his entourage at Haslemere. Once a bear arrived from Canada, half out of its box to the consternation of the porters, and had to be accommodated in a cowstall.

Maude Abbott regarded Hutchinson as a pioneer and great exponent of the museum idea. He started, at the Oxford meeting of the British Medical Association in 1868, the pathological museum which became a great feature of those annual meetings subsequently. His own marvellous collection of drawings and paintings, the centre of remarkable post-graduate teaching sessions first at Park Crescent and later at the Polyclinic, were sadly lost to this country and now adorn the Johns Hopkins Medical School.

Jane Hutchinson, who was never converted to his religious views, must have lived a strenuous life, first at Finsbury Circus and later at Cavendish Square. There was a family of ten children and on holiday they occupied a whole hotel. Students and sometimes colleagues would be boarded in the house and entertainment was continuous, though sometimes this much-engaged man whose great virtue was patience and who protested against urgency in life, would invite his guests at the wrong hour or for the wrong day. He is fond of quoting:—

"What's Time? Leave now for dogs and apes,
Man has forever"

but the amount of work he achieved in his lifetime can hardly have been done at a leisurely pace. Jane died in her early fifties.

I must of necessity hurry over the facts of his medical career and activities which would take too long merely to detail. In 1850 he went from York to "Barts" under James Paget and within a few months passed his M.R.C.S. and L.S.A. and subsequently held hospital staff appointments at the City Chest Hospital, The Metropolitan Free Hospital, Blackfriars Skin Hospital and Moorfield Ophthalmic Hospital, and in 1859 was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the London Hospital.

He wrote learnedly on all the subjects and specialties he practised; was president of all the appropriate societies and became an F.R.C.S. in 1862. He was an Honorary LL.D. of many universities, including Leeds. He was for some time editor of the *British Medical Journal*, was responsible as secretary for the publications of the New Sydenham Society and was President of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1889. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1882.

He refused a knighthood, for as Dean Inge has said, "A man does not care for applause or recognition except when he is not sure that he is working along the right lines" and Hutchinson was very sure. But in 1908, at the age of eighty, he was persuaded to accept the honour for the good of science and of the profession.

But what of dermatology? Hutchinson made great contributions to the study of ophthalmology and of pathology; he was no mean neurologist and must have credit for fostering Hughlings Jackson. He was, I suppose, with Fournier of France, the greatest syphilologist of all time; but it is only necessary to glance at his wonderful atlases of illustrations of clinical surgery and to peruse those ten volumes of his Archives of Surgery to know that Hutchinson's love and inspiration was dermatology.

From Laycock in York he learnt the importance of the physiognomy in clinical medicine. Hutchinson went further and saw not only in the face but in the behaviour of the entire skin the challenge to a knowledge of the whole range of disease processes, and he draws upon all the sciences for his analogies and ideas. He relates acne and allied eruptions to the suppression of hair in the course of evolution. He draws an analogy between the secretion of wax by the bee and of sebum by the human. Since the bee must be gorged with honey before it secretes abundant wax he suggests that honey and sugar and chocolate, bacon and fat, may with advantage be restricted in the seborrhœic. He finds it disappointing that so little has been added to our knowledge of tuberculosis by the finding of the tubercle bacillus by Koch—and how true that is still. "Partnership in disease," as he expresses it, is fundamental to his conception of human pathology—especially is he interested in hereditary and environmental factors in the patient, as well as the specific seed of disease, as it may be the germ. He notes an underlying relationship between alopecia, leucoderma and scleroderma. He gives accounts of dermatitis arising in three boys from the handling of vanilla powder, and of urticaria in a man from the ingestion of minute quantities of parsley and other examples of idiosyncrasy. Hutchinson was a keen advocate of vaccination but did not flinch from and indeed published evidence supporting the dangers of infection, including syphilis, from arm-to-arm vaccination and was instrumental in bringing the practice to an end. He had a lively imagination. He first used the descriptive term apple-jelly nodule, but could not think of lupus as a solitary disease, it was for him the head of a family of disease.

Hutchinson described independently and often originally a considerable number of affections, for many of which he is not given credit. These include the spider naevus, the infective angioma (*serpiginosum*), pemphigus vegetans, so-called Fordyce's disease of the lip, cheiropompholyx, glossitis of the sides of the tongue from amalgam used in filling teeth, so-called Bazin's disease, the acute carcinoma, carcinoma erysipelatodes or telangiectaticum.

The clinical description of most of his cases is remarkably fine. He was a masterly observer and lost no opportunity of stressing the importance of observation and of care and diligence in recording and note-taking which, when coupled with the exercise of common sense, are for Hutchinson the essence of good practice. When told that one of his clerks never examined his patient but having the diagnosis, wrote up his notes from a textbook, Hutchinson commented upon the probability of the more learned behaving in similar fashion, finding signs and symptoms which ought to be present instead of observing what was, in fact, present. Writing more than fifty years ago he says, "The tendency of the day is to expect all truth from the microscope and the test-tube and to allow from any announcement of fact from the laboratory a degree of confidence which is refused to the verdict given on circumstantial evidence. In spite of this it remains as true as ever that but a small portion of the problems with which the physician has to deal can be decided by such tests. The greater part need for their solution the careful and very detailed collection of facts of another kind."

He derived great satisfaction from coupling the names of two disease processes as indicating partnership in pathological reactions, as acne lupus, lichen psoriasis, eczema cancer (for intra-epidermal cancer), lupoid syphilis, etc. He was very conscious of the fact that the same stimulus might provoke different reactions in different individuals and conversely, that different stimuli could provoke the same reaction in a given subject or in certain particular states. There is no doubt that he was feeling here for an explanation of pathological action in relation to the individual as being of significance apart from the specific agents of disease processes and it is still a neglected field. He saw similarities where others saw differences and though in particular instances he may have carried this too far, nevertheless this is an important approach which is clearly going to bear fruit in due season. Hutchinson was not blind to the great variety of appearances of the same disease, even to the desirability of recording and naming them, but he saw further ahead where they would be again gathered into family relationships. It was in line with his belief that "The aim of all true-hearted specialists should be to break down the walls of their specialism."

What an excellent thing to record all your clinical cases accurately through life as did Hutchinson. There is much to commend his delightful habit of naming clinical entities with the name of the first patient recorded with the disease. As he states, if you want to know the particular features of the disease, you look up that original case report, until such time, may be, as the affection is established or recognized. Thus we have his Mrs. Mortimer's disease (multiple lupus), the Philip Holmes Series (chilblain lupus), and Mrs. Branford's legs (Bazin's Disease). His careful description of the various summer eruptions, erythema, urticaria, eczema, prurigo and the vesicular rashes, have rightly earned for them the title of Hutchinson's summer eruptions. He was the first to associate the condition of molluscum

contagiosum with the taking of Turkish baths. He held that "A man ought to collect in his youth and write in his old age."

Hutchinson had many delightful human traits, and was at times almost naive. He thought, for instance, that it would be fairer to ask every candidate at an examination the same question, but had to abandon the practice because the out-going candidate soon passed the information to those awaiting interview. He is said regularly to have read *Punch* and he certainly had a sense of fun and humour. He could be very obstinate, as witness his adherence to his theory that leprosy was due to eating bad fish. Even after the bacillus was described by Hansen, which fact he accepted, he travelled far afield to satisfy himself that the eating of fish was still a factor, though the American, Pusey, said rather unkindly that he only proved that fish was eaten all over the world.

Interesting is Hutchinson's reaction to

"The grape that can with logic absolute
The two and seventy jarring sects confute."

As a young man he was a rigid teetotaller but he mellowed with the years. "Owing to migrainous headaches and loss of health," says his son, "he had experimented in drugs and alcohol during his early London days and had decided definitely in favour of the latter; beer at first and later wine; a decision from which he never swerved and openly advocated it for men. He was always of opinion that women and children did not need alcohol, but that a man living at pressure, with perhaps insufficient exercise, would be in far more vigorous mental and bodily health with the aid of a little wine. He came to that conclusion with much reluctance and after much experimentation. He wrote out his experiences and reasons for the change but had no doubt whatever that he was right in making it."

Described as the greatest general practitioner in Europe, there is much that could be told of the simple technique which made him great, his simple approach, his ability to learn from the patient, his clear records with the graphic "space for time" diagrams from which his later generalizations were drawn. These were charts for acute and for chronic ills, where the incidence of the major features of the disease were recorded in relation to time so that incubation period, prognosis, sequelæ, etc., could be readily observed by comparing a number of charts of the same disease. It was in line with his advocacy of a simple register in the home, of health and major happenings from birth, the Life Register. Hutchinson saw the desirability of school meals, of organized leisure recreations and of the museum idea for school children.

Writing seven years after his death, Sir Thomas Barlow found it difficult to parallel such a life and noted that he threw a flood of light on the commonest diseases and that "His faculty of the scientific use of the imagination enabled him to show the relationship of one disease to another, however far they might, superficially, seem to be apart."

Osler stressed his strong likeness to the immortal Hunter.

At his wish his tombstone bears the inscription "A man of hope and forward-looking mind," than which none could be more modest or more appropriate.



JONATHAN HUTCHINSON (caricature by Spy)

This must seem a poor tribute to one to whom we in dermatology owe so much. The difficulty has been to know what to include and what to omit and to talk of Jonathan Hutchinson without reference to Hutchinson's teeth or his triad must seem ill-balanced. But I have been concerned rather to use Hutchinson as a means of commending the study of dermatology. With such an example before us it is odd that more of our profession with the stamp of genius have not been inspired as Hutchinson was so naturally and easily inspired by this fascinating approach to medicine through dermatology. Why have our Medical Councils and medical schools not seen wisdom as clearly as he saw it but gone a-whoring after false gods? (The address was illustrated with photographs of Sir Jonathan Hutchinson and water-colour reproductions of cases of carcinoma erysipelatodes.)

My acknowledgments and thanks are due to Mr. Herbert Hutchinson and Messrs. Heinemann for permission to use the plates of the portraits of Jonathan Hutchinson.

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13th December, 1948.

My dear Ingram,

Many thanks for sending me the reprint about Jonathan Hutchinson, which I found very interesting.

We have got a big problem before us in trying to arrange satisfactory terms for consultants and in removing some of their grievances.

Yours ever,

J.T.Ingram, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P.,
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